



## Moderator's Corner

### Hi Southeast Conference Friends!



I hope this note finds you enjoying a summer full of blessings. For many of our churches, it's the traditional season for Missions Trips, Vacation Bible Schools, Graduation Celebrations, Church Picnics, and Fish Fry's. And - of course... let's not forget our wonderful tradition of gathering and being church all together at the Southeast Conference Annual Meeting!

At this year's annual meeting, you blessed me and many others by installing us as your Conference Board Members. You also installed June Boutwell, a dedicated, well-equipped, and caring leader, as our Designated Conference Minister. Thank you for entrusting us and so many other conference staff and volunteer leaders to this important work together.

As your elected Board, we recognize full well that we are only a very small part of our conference's overarching ministry. We all - clergy, lay-folk, conference staff, individuals and whole congregations - are vital parts of this unique and important body of Christ in the Southeast. And so I am writing you now to ask, as we are looking toward fall and all the ministries that are often sparked and re-energized during that season... Won't you join us on this journey of Conference Life we began together anew this summer? We have begun to share our stories and dreams. And I encourage you to be a part of continuing that by...

- \* Staying actively aware, present, and engaged in the amazing ministry and work that our churches do collectively,
- \* Sharing the good news and helpful ideas from your local churches that may edify the full body, and
- \* Praying earnestly for the good work of the Conference.

It is through our work with, support of, and love for each other that our churches and neighbors may find the hope and light, justice and peace, reconciliation and welcome that come through Christ. Yes, our God is alive and real and listening and very much, still speaking - and it's our collective call to make sure the Southeast knows that!

Your Conference Board members are listed below. For more information about the board and the conference, please check out the conference website at [secucc.org](http://secucc.org). Also... Reading, sharing, and acting upon information from this monthly eNewsletter is a great way to engage in this conference life together.

Our first board meeting is scheduled for mid-September. I'll be in touch again soon after that. Until then Read On - and Join Us!

**Jen Austin**

2014-15 Southeast Conference Moderator

*Lettings from June*

## Blessings from June

I grew up in a singing church and one of the songs from my childhood has been repeating in my head these past few weeks.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one; Count your blessings, see what God has done;  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what our God has done.*

I have been appreciating what a blessing serving this Conference is in my life right now. The energy and hopefulness and offering of gifts has not lessened since Annual Meeting. I know with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind that God has a plan for this ministry and for each of us. For that I am truly grateful and will wait with delight and anticipation as that is revealed to us in the days to come.



For now I continue to work on that road map for the future and have been meeting with leadership in the Conference over the past few weeks. The ideas and commitment to vital ministry are filling me with joy and humble appreciation for the ministry you all have to offer to one other.

And your warm welcome continues as the fall calendar is filling up with invitations to preach, to be at events, to work with churches in various ways. Thank you for the welcome and the opportunity to develop relationships with your churches and your leaders and your faithful folk.

Especially hold in your prayers those churches in search for a pastor: Pilgrim Birmingham, Fairfield Glade, Pleasant Hill, Community Montgomery. And pray for Rush Memorial and Rev. Larry Calbert upon his retirement June 29; United Church of Cookeville and Rev. Gene Skipworth as he retires on August 31; and for Pilgrim Chattanooga and Rev. David Brown as he retires on December 31. Many things are in transition in Southeast Conference and we need to hold all that in the light of God's grace and in our daily prayers.

From July 29-August 6 I have been observing Sabbath time - enjoying the company of my sister and her husband and taking some time for renewal and relaxation. I am excited to return refreshed and ready to hit the road with the ministry!

***Blessings, June***

### AROUND the CONFERENCE

**Patrick Rogers** was featured in the news recently for UCC Pensacola's work to protect gender identity and



gender expression in the Escambia County's student policy manual. On July 15th the school board voted unanimously to add it. You can read the article on the [WEAR ABC website by clicking here](#). Note that they've been having trouble with their web page and it may not display properly until it is fixed. [A version cached by Google is](#)

[here.](#)

## PATHWAYS

Theological Education for a Changing World  
[www.tasc21.net](http://www.tasc21.net)



**Dorothy Virginia Wilkins Robbs**, 89 died on July 1, 2014. Dorothy, the mother of Vanessa Robbs, past conference moderator, was a devoted member of Pilgrim Congregational Church in Chattanooga, TN, where she served as church council corporate secretary and president of the Ladies' Guild.

## Generosity Corner

August is here and it's time now for your church to begin planning for your Fall Pledge and Stewardship events. Do you have your committee formed? All of your planning and work around the pledge season can be made fun and fruitful by utilizing the resources available from our 2014 UCC Stewardship Materials which are now available from UCC Resources. You can get these materials by visiting <http://www.ucc.org/stewardship/> or by calling 1-800-537-3394



This 2014 Stewardship season theme is Blessed to be a blessing.... All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" Genesis 12:3. Materials available include a Graphics Kit, Bulletin Inserts, Giving charts and Commitment/Pledge cards.

Often we talk about Generosity, it's meaning, it's role in our lives or how it can be measured. I recently came upon a poem by Ralph W. Seager, that, for me, captures it all. It's called The Extravagance of God. Ralph W. Seager was an American poet from Penn Yan, NY (1922-2008).

**The Extravagance of God**  
by Ralph W. Seager

PATHWAYS is offering trial courses to anyone who wishes to explore an alternative pattern of theological and ministerial training online. As a special one time event, two 6-week courses are offered at a discounted rate\* this fall:

### **Spiritual Formation and Discernment** **Aug. 20 ~ Sept. 30, 2014**

An exploration of personal spirituality and discernment of God's calling through an integrative reflection on life, faith, and future.

### **Caring for Self and Others** **Oct. 22 ~ Dec. 9, 2014**

A blend of contemporary personality psychology with traditional practices of prayer, the contemplative reading of scripture, and spiritual direction to engage an integrated understanding of self and the practice of self-care and care for others.

\*No application is necessary to register. Each courses are \$320. Register for both courses for \$600. Limited, need-based scholarship is available for qualifying participants. Send registration and scholarship inquiries to PATHWAYS administrator at:

[admin\\_pathways@tasc21.net](mailto:admin_pathways@tasc21.net)



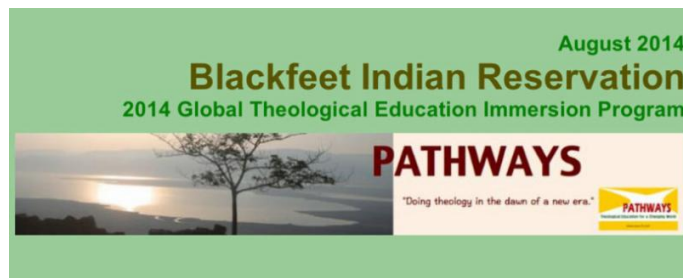
### **UCC Polity Course** **Sept 10 ~ Dec 9, 2014**

Cost: \$600

Register by August 27, 2014

Registration Contact: [admin\\_pathways@tascs21.net](mailto:admin_pathways@tascs21.net)

Need to fulfill your UCC History and Polity course requirement for authorized ministry in the United Church of Christ? In addition to the trial courses a new 12-week Polity course will be offered in the fall as well. Sign up now!





*more sky than man can see  
More seas than he can sail,  
More sun than he can bear to watch  
More stars than he can scale.*

*More breath than he can breathe,  
More yield than he can sow,  
More grace than he can comprehend,  
More love than he can know.*

*Debbie Spearman, Generosity Coordinator*



### **2015 General Synod** *June 26 - 30, 2015*

Information about General Synod 30 is now available. The focus of the coming national gathering will be 'Unexpected Places' - lifting up the places that we find (and hear) God, and the places where we find church and the UCC witness to the world. You can get more information by visiting [www.ucc.org/synod/](http://www.ucc.org/synod/)



### **African American Women in Ministry Conference at Franklinton Center** *October 9-11, 2014*

With the theme "Embracing God's Call: From Isolation to Celebration" all are invited to join in the African American Women in Ministry Conference at Franklinton Center. This year's conference includes a celebration of 50 years in ministry of Yvonne Delk, the first African American woman ordained in the UCC. Guest speakers include Rev. Dr. Christine Wiley, co-pastor of Covenant Baptist/UCC in Washington, the Rev. Dr. Valerie

**PATHWAYS GTE emersion trip** to the Blackfeet reservation will be on August 23-29. [You can follow what's happening on the trip by checking in with the PATHWAYS Facebook page here.](#)



**Please mark your calendar with the following events!**

#### **2014**

**August 16** *Commission on Ministry Meeting*

**September 12-13** *SEC Board of Directors Retreat*

**October 3-4** *Alabama Tennessee Association Meeting  
First Congregational Birmingham AL*

**October 6-8** *Retired Servants Retreat for Southeast and Southern Conferences  
Blowing Rock Assembly Grounds,  
Blowing Rock NC*

**November 7-8** *Emergence Retreat Clemson SC*

#### **2015**

**June 11-13** *Pre-event and Southeast Conference Annual Meeting, Piedmont College, Demorest GA*

**June 26-30** *General Synod in Cleveland, OH*

**October 16-18** *Southern Regional Women's Conference,  
Sumatanga Retreat Center, Gallant AL*

#### **2016**

**July 26-29** *National Youth Event Orlando FL*

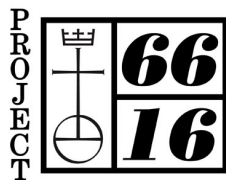


**Emergence Retreat - November 7-9, 2014**

The Emergence Retreat, created by Peace

Bridgeman, founder and Executive Director of WomanPreach and the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Leath, pastor of Campbell AME Church, Media, PA. There will be spirited worship, wisdom circles, panel discussions and a little time for fun and sistership.

[More information and registration materials can be found on the UCC website by clicking here.](#)



Mike Stroud, director of the Project 66-16 history initiative of the Conference, was unable to present a workshop scheduled during the 2014 Annual Meeting. In lieu of that, he is providing his presentation on the website, in two installments. [Click here for part II of the presentation: "Why Project 66-16?"](#)



### Matching Grants for Congregations Collecting CWS Disaster Relief Kits

Church World Service is offering matching funds for congregations to create disaster relief kits for their work around the world. There are still many available, and this makes a great activity for volunteers, small groups, and youth groups in your congregation

[To read about matching grants for churches click here to go to the CWS website.](#)

Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

The Emergence Retreat, created by Peace Congregational UCC, will be held at the beautiful Outdoor Lab in Clemson, South Carolina to bring GLBTQ young adults and their communities of faith together for education, open dialogue, spiritual growth and healing. Registration will open soon.

[Click here for the Emergence website.](#)

[Read the article about Emergence on the SECUCC website by clicking here.](#)

### Fourth Annual Retired Servants Retreat

Retired UCC Clergy, Missionaries, Volunteer Ministry Workers and Spouses of the Southeast and Southern Conferences of the United Church of Christ are invited to a Fourth Annual Retired Servants Retreat at Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock, North Carolina October 6-8, 2014 (Monday-Wednesday). Retreat Theme: *Justice and Peace through the UCC.*

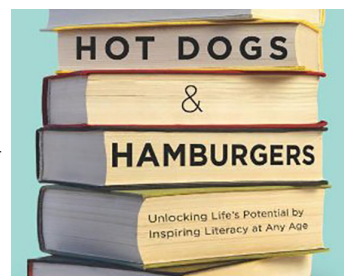
[Click here for more information on the SECUCC website](#)



Literacy is a justice issue! The UCC would like to encourage congregations to participate on September 8th on project "One Read". This initiative is designed to engage people of faith and provide a common ground surrounding the literacy crisis in the U.S. Our hope is that, through reading and discussion, we will come together, stimulate conversations, and facilitate learning within and beyond our congregations.

It is simple to participate in One Read. Buy and read the book, *Hotdogs and Hamburgers: Unlocking Life's Potential by Inspiring Literacy at Any Age* by Rob Shindler, download the free discussion guide, and encourage your

congregation, friends and family to join in. You can get more information about this ongoing justice work of the UCC on the [Reading Changes Lives website by clicking](#)



CCC on the [Reading Changes Lives](#) website by clicking [here](#).



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